

The New York Times<https://www.nytimes.com/1966/11/23/archives/soviet-places-a-new-emphasis-on-civil-defense-revived-concern-is.html>

Soviet Places a New Emphasis on Civil Defense; Revived Concern Is Believed Related to China's Growing Nuclear Potential

By Raymond H. Anderson Special To the New York Times

Nov. 23, 1966



See the article in its original context from
November 23, 1966, Page 4 Buy Reprints

New York Times subscribers* enjoy full access to
TimesMachine—view over 150 years of New
York Times journalism, as it originally appeared.

SUBSCRIBE

*Does not include Crossword-only or
Cooking-only subscribers.

About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems; we are continuing to work to improve these archived versions.

MOSCOW, Nov. 22-Heightened concern about civil defense preparations against possible threats of nuclear attack is being voiced in the Soviet Union. In the last several weeks, demands have been published for an acceleration of programs to train citizens in civil

defense methods. Factories and other enterprises have been instructed to step up work on shelters and to hasten procurement of protective equipment. Although the calls are phrased in terms of the possibility of an attack by "imperialists," it is noted here that the campaign follows Communist China's rapid advances in nuclear weapons and missiles at a time when Peking's relations with the Soviet Union are deteriorating. Late last month, almost simultaneously with China's successful test of a guided missile armed with a nuclear warhead, an article by Marshal Vasily I. Chuikov, chief of Soviet civil defense, was widely published in the Soviet press.

Printed under the headline, "There is a defense against the nuclear weapon!" Marshal Chuikov's article emphasized the urgency of training every Soviet citizen to protect himself and others against nuclear blasts and radiation. Today Krasnaya Zvezda, newspaper of the Defense Ministry, printed an editorial assailing indifference and delays in implementing instructions to prepare Soviet cities and villages against an atomic bomb. The paper warned that in a nuclear war, "if it is unleashed by the imperialists," there will be no distinction between the front line and the civilian rear.

Training in civil defense against nuclear attack has been widespread in the Soviet Union since the advent of the atomic age, but the problem has acquired a new urgency now with the prospects of the development of an arsenal of nuclear weapons and missiles by a hostile China.

The Soviet Union is reported to have moved troop reinforcements to the Chinese border and, according to information published from Washington, has informed the United States of increasing concern about the dispute with China.

In his article Marshal Chuikov sought to assure Soviet citizens that steps could be taken to reduce the toll of dead and injured in a nuclear war. "Many people who find themselves in the zone of a nuclear blast can save their lives if they prepare measures of protection in due time and learn how to make use of them," the marshal wrote.

Most important, he continued, is the education of every person to understand the hazards and to use every possible means of protection. "In our age, when the nuclear rocket weapon is the most powerful striking force of the arms of the most technically and economically advanced states, a person can nonetheless save himself from it, save livestock, food supplies and so forth," Marshal Chuikov said. "Therefore every official must constantly take pains to be certain that full attention is paid to civil defense in his enterprise or organization."

Although the Soviet Union contends that workers and students are trained in the fundamentals of civil defense, including first aid and techniques of constructing shelters against radiation fallout, there is virtually no public information about actual shelter construction. It is authoritatively reported that deep subway systems in Moscow,

Leningrad and Kiev can serve as shelters in the event of an attack. Some observers believe that projects to construct subways in major industrial cities such as Baku and Kharkov are also related to civil defense requirements.

The training in the fundamentals of saving one's life in a nuclear attack does not seem to have given the average Soviet citizen any more optimism about surviving than is felt by the man in the street in the United States.

The following Soviet anecdote sums up the skepticism about survival chances in a nuclear war:

Q.-"What should I do if there is a nuclear attack?"

A.--"Pull a sheet over your head and start walking very slowly toward the nearest cemetery."

Q.-"Why very slowly?"

A.-"To avoid causing panic in the streets."